H-Diplo Roundtable Review of Piotr H. Kosicki, Catholics on the Barricades: Poland, France, and "Revolution," 1891-1956 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2018)

Johnston-White, Rachel

Published in:
H-Diplo

Publication date:
2020

H-Diplo ROUNDTABLE XXI-38

Piotr H. Kosicki. ***Catholics on the Barricades: Poland, France, and "Revolution," 1891-1956.*** New Haven: Yale University Press, 2018. ISBN: 9780300225518 (hardcover, $40.00).

27 April 2020 | https://hdiplo.org/to/RT21-38
Roundtable Editor: Diane Labrosse | Production Editor: George Fujii

Contents

Introduction by Sarah Shortall, University of Notre Dame

Piotr Kosicki's *Catholics on the Barricades* is a testament to the exciting new wave of scholarship on the history of Catholicism that has emerged in the past few years. Led by a new generation of scholars, it has drawn attention to the pivotal role that Catholics have played in the signal developments of twentieth-century politics, from the rise of fascism and Communism to decolonization and human rights activism.[1] Together, these works have helped to reframe our understanding of twentieth-century diplomatic and international history, as the H-Diplo roundtables dedicated to several of these works attest.[2]

The bulk of this recent scholarship has focused on Western Europe, where the rise of conservative Christian Democratic parties was the dominant feature of postwar political life.[3] The great merit of Kosicki's book is to draw our attention to a very different strand in the postwar history of European Catholicism: the rise of a transnational Catholic engagement with socialism that managed to bridge the formidable divide of the Iron Curtain.

And yet, Kosicki sensibly avoids the pitfalls of applying secular political categories such as 'right' and 'left' to actors who so often eschewed these terms. He locates the history of Catholic socialism within a much wider Catholic yearning for a "personalist revolution" (xxiv), broadly construed—one that brought French and Polish Catholics in particular into dialogue. Polish Catholics turned to the ideas of French personalists such as Jacques Maritain and Emmanuel Mounier, while French Catholics like Mounier looked to Poland as the ideal place to build Catholic socialism. But the terms 'revolution' and 'personalism' were sufficiently malleable to include, not just proponents of a political revolution, but also those seeking a pastoral revolution based on new tools of evangelization capable of speaking to the working class. The latter camp included a young Karol Wojtyła, who was fascinated by the new experiments in missionary engagement coming out of France and Belgium, such as the worker-priest movement, and who would seek to implement his personalist vision when he

[1] To name only a few recent works in this vein, see Giuliana Chamedes, *A Twentieth-Century Crusade: The Vatican's Battle to Remake Catholic Europe* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2019); Edward Baring, *Converts to the Real: Catholicism and the Making of Continental Philosophy* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2019); Elizabeth Foster, *African Catholic: Decolonization and the Transformation of the Church* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2019); James Chappel, *Catholic Modern: The Challenge of Totalitarianism and the Remaking of the Church* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2018); Albert Monshan Wu, *From Christ to Confucius: German Missionaries, Chinese Christians, and the Globalization of Christianity, 1860-1950* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2016); Marco Duranti, *The Conservative Human Rights Revolution: European Identity, Transnational Politics, and the Origins of the European Convention* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017); Darcie Fontaine, *Decolonizing Christianity: Religion and the End of Empire in France and Algeria* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016); Samuel Moyn, *Christian Human Rights* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2015); and John Connelly, *From Enemy to Brother: The Revolution in Catholic Teaching on the Jews, 1933-1965* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2012).

[2] H-Diplo Roundtable XXI-26 on Giuliana Chamedes, *A Twentieth-Century Crusade: The Vatican's Battle to Remake Christian Europe*, 3 February 2020, https://hdiplo.org/to/RT21-26; H-Diplo Roundtable XX-9 on James Chappel, *Catholic Modern: The Challenge of Totalitarianism and the Remaking of the Church*, 26 October 2018, https://hdiplo.org/roundtables/PDF/Roundtable-XX-9.pdf.

[3] See esp. Chappel, *Catholic Modern*; Duranti, *The Conservative Human Rights Revolution*; Moyn, *Christian Human Rights*; Wolfram Kaiser, *Christian Democracy and the Origins of the European Union* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007); Maria Mitchell, *The Origins of Christian Democracy: Politics and Confession in Modern Germany* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2012); Thomas Kselman and Joseph A. Buttigieg, eds., *European Christian Democracy: Historical Legacies and Comparative Perspectives* (Notre Dame: Notre Dame University Press, 2003); Michael Gehler and Wolfram Kaiser, eds., *Christian Democracy in Europe since 1945* (London: Routledge, 2004); and Jan-Werner Müller, *Contesting Democracy: Political Ideas in Twentieth-Century Europe* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2011), 132-143.

became Pope John Paul II in 1978. The very breadth and malleability of the "personalist revolution" thus ensured that it would survive the fall of Communism in Poland in 1989.

Kosicki's account of the development of these various visions for a "personalist revolution" spans the period from the rise of social Catholicism at the end of the nineteenth century to de-Stalinization in Poland after 1956, gesturing ahead in the epilogue to the rise of the Solidarity movement and the fall of Communism. The central achievements of his book are twofold. By tracing the complex trajectories of Catholics who grappled with how to incarnate their personalist ideals within rapidly changing (and very limiting) political circumstances, Kosicki shows how frequently these actors moved across political boundaries or held positions that might seem ideologically contradictory—blending, for instance, Catholic Socialism with ethno-nationalism. The book's second great achievement is to provide a template for a transnational history of Catholicism that would decenter the role of the Vatican, drawing attention instead to the lateral links that connect Catholics operating in different national contexts without necessarily passing through Rome.

The reviews in this forum praise Kosicki for these achievements, while also suggesting ways in which the narrative he has developed could be complemented and expanded. Natalie Gasparowicz and Albert Wu expand upon the possibilities that Kosicki's work raises for a global history of Catholicism. Drawing upon their own work on Mexico and China, respectively, they point to the resonances between Kosicki's story and developments in the Global South. They suggest ways in which his analysis might be extended by drawing out the links between the Polish story and broader developments such as decolonization, liberation theology, and the debates around sexuality and reproduction touched off by the encyclical *Humanae Vitae* in 1968. And they indicate how Kosicki's effort to decenter Rome might be further developed by attending to the transversal links, not just between Catholics in Poland and France, but also between those in Europe and the Global South. Gasparowicz raises a crucial question about how historians ought to grapple with the often asymmetrical nature of those exchanges—a problem that is evident in the way the Polish Catholics in Kosicki's story seemed to draw much more extensively on their French counterparts than vice versa. This problem is of course not confined to the history of Catholicism; it is a crucial question for transnational and global history more broadly.

Rachel Johnston-White focuses instead on the "dark side" of personalism that Kosicki's narrative reveals—the way personalist rhetoric was deployed in the service not just of solidarity and universal human dignity, but also of ethno-national exclusion. She asks whether these dangers are inherent in the concept of personalism itself or were the product of contingent historical developments (and can thus be overcome). In addition, she suggests that Kosicki's account might benefit from a greater attention to the ecumenical dialogue between Catholics and Protestants that emerged particularly powerfully in the ranks of the French Resistance.

Kosicki's response to these reviews is both thoughtful and thorough. He expands upon several topics that are not covered in his book but on which he has published elsewhere, such as the Polish contribution to the debate over *Humanae Vitae* and the global Catholic sixties, as well as the pre-history of Solidarity. He responds to the queries raised by the reviewers about the developments that follow the end of his story in 1956, the difficulty of assigning political labels to the actors he studies, and the irreducible tensions within the term 'personalism.' And he suggests how these tensions might shed light on the recent resurgence of the politics of exclusion in Poland. Both the reviews and Kosicki's response are an indication the we are entering a vibrant new chapter in the revival of scholarship on the history of Catholicism, as it moves beyond European high politics to engage new questions, such as gender and sexuality, and new regions, such as Latin America, Africa, and Asia.

Participants:

Piotr H. Kosicki is Associate Professor of History at the University of Maryland. His books include the monograph *Catholics on the Barricades: Poland, France, and "Revolution," 1891-1956* (Yale University Press, 2018) and the edited volumes *Christian Democracy across the Iron Curtain* (Palgrave, 2018), *Christian Democracy and the Fall of Communism* (Leuven, 2019), *The Long 1989* (Central European University Press, 2019), and *Vatican II behind the Iron Curtain* (Catholic University of America Press 2016).

Sarah Shortall is Assistant Professor of History at the University of Notre Dame. She is the author of *Soldiers of God in a Secular World: The Politics of Catholic Theology in Twentieth-Century France*, which is under contract with Harvard University Press, and co-editor (with Daniel Steinmetz-Jenkins) of *Christianity and Human Rights Reconsidered*, which is due out later this year with Cambridge University Press.

Natalie Gasparowicz is a Ph.D. student at the History Department of Duke University. Her dissertation examines the intersection of Catholicism, gender, sexuality, surrounding questions of birth control and reproduction in twentieth-century Mexico.

Rachel Johnston-White is an Assistant Professor of European Languages and Cultures at the University of Groningen. She holds a Ph.D. in History from Yale University (2017). Her research has appeared in the *Journal of Contemporary History*. Her current book project investigates how radical Christians in twentieth-century France understood their relationship to the state and their duty of obedience as citizens. It argues that the politicization of conscience offered a challenge to the post-war European human rights framework, in which state sovereignty remained relatively unchecked, especially in the colonial sphere.

Albert Wu is an assistant professor of history at the American University of Paris. His first book, *From Christ to Confucius: German Missionaries, Chinese Christians, and the Globalization of Christianity, 1860-1950*, appeared with Yale University Press in 2016. In 2016-2017, he was an Alexander von Humboldt Postdoctoral Fellow at the Free University, Berlin, where he was working on a second book project related to histories of global health.

Review by Natalie Gasparowicz, Duke University

Catholics on the Barricades is a meticulously researched and methodologically innovative study of twentieth-century Catholicism. In it, Piotr Kosicki traces the intellectual exchanges of personalism between Polish and French Catholic intellectuals, with attention to the varying ideological differences, historical moments, and various projects taken up by these individuals. He tracks not only intellectuals, priests, and laymen, but also presses and journals. His goal is to trace how ideas of personalism, Catholic socialism, and "revolution" were forged and how they evolved in this turbulent, transnational landscape. Kosicki's monograph raises many important and interesting issues, and scholars from a range of fields will engage with it in different ways. I am a student of Catholicism in the global South, focusing on themes of gender and sexuality in Mexico. In this response, I will explore what scholars of non-European Catholicism have to learn from Kosicki's book—and also what questions those scholars might, in turn, pose to him.

Mexico, like many other Catholic countries, cherishes a myth about its own 'homegrown' Catholicism, which was supposedly forged in a relationship between local traditions and the Vatican. Recent scholarship in Mexico and the Americas have also used the transnational approach to study Catholicism and illuminate new connections.[4] Focusing on the Polish case, *Catholics on the Barricades* shows us how these myths can be questioned by probing different sorts of spaces. In the first few pages of his ambitious work, Kosicki writes: "By the mid-twentieth century, for many Polish Catholics, the immediate point of reference and inspiration in the Catholic world was not, in fact Rome. Rather, Paris was where the action was" (8). For studies of the global Church, this shows how the traditional center—the Vatican—was not always where Catholic intellectuals were looking. Kosicki argues that for these Polish Catholics, it was France. Furthermore, he decenters the Polish nation in his story, and clearly illustrates the role of French thinkers, particularly Catholic philosopher, Jacques Maritain and founder of French journal *Esprit*, Emmanuel Mounier, in how they shaped the Polish intellectual world. All of this throws into doubt the Polish myth that Poland's Catholicism is rooted in native soil, providing a rampart against foreign (or Communist) influence. "The Solidarity movement," Kosicki writes, "was both thanks to and in spite of the ideas and individuals explored in this book" (304). In other words, these ideas did not emerge in Poland in isolation. They had a Franco-Polish legacy.

Furthermore, Kosicki provides a model for how, exactly, we might track transnational exchange. Throughout his impressive work, Kosicki analyzes the varied nature of this relationship between Poland and France. In the first stage of the relationship, Kosicki asserts that Poland was on the receiving end of French ideas, notably those of Maritain and Mounier. Priests from interwar Poland had attended French Catholic institutes of learning and had brought back ideas about Thomism to their homeland (22). The reader learns that the famous Polish poet Czesław Miłosz looked to Maritain as well but was not as much a fan of Mounier (71). Polish actors did not uniformly praise the French. Instead, their assessments varied by actor and circumstance. Beginning with Chapter 4, with Mounier's May 1946 visit to Poland, Kosicki argues that this relationship moved past Polish reception and turns more into a genuine exchange.

The book raised questions, though, about the nature of intellectual exchange, and how we might tell the difference between genuine encounter and one-directional influence. For example, Mounier's visit is one of the few moments where we clearly see how French actors were shaped by Polish intellectuals. Kosicki powerfully describes how Mounier was motivated by the questions the Polish example presented (135), but also argues that Mounier's reading of Poland was wrong. Mounier was right only in his depiction of anti-Semitism in Poland. Jerzy Turowicz, the editor of *Tygodnik Powszechny*, was immensely disappointed by Mounier's visit. Kosicki finds "fissures" among Polish intellectuals that can be traced to Mounier's visit (141). After Mounier returned to France, the French journal *Esprit* established a press exchange with Poland (163). Were there any indications of the Polish visit affecting Mounier himself? In Chapter 5, where Kosicki argues that the journal *Dziś*

[4] Stephen J. C. Andes, *The Vatican and Catholic Activism in Mexico and Chile: The Politics of Transnational Catholicism, 1920-1940* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014); Julia Young, *Mexican Exodus: Emigrants, Exiles, and Refugees of the Cristero War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015).

i Jutro and the congress on world peace in Poland helped facilitate Polish-French cooperation across the Iron Curtain, again, there seems to be more French, as opposed to Polish, influence flowing. If this exchange was in fact an unequal one between Polish and French intellectuals, how does that change Kosicki's narrative? What would that mean for studying intellectual exchange within the global Church?

By unearthing progressive elements of the Polish Church, Kosicki further questions the dominant narrative of Catholic conservatism. He is not alone here, as he recognizes.[5] For example, scholars like Agnieszka Kościańska have examined how Polish memory has forgotten progressive Catholicism and how this affected Catholic ideas about birth control and gender more broadly.[6] Kosicki himself wrote an article on the intricate dynamics of political and doctrinal radicalism of Catholic socialist Ludwik Dembiński in the context of the turbulent landscape of the global 1960s.[7] Another fascinating aspect of Kosicki's book is more of an implicit argument—how these actors and intellectuals were later remembered in the Solidarity movement and the collapse of Communism in Poland. Throughout this work Kosicki comments on how individuals, like head bishop Stefan Wyszyński (124) or key thinker and activist Tadeusz Mazowiecki (220), contributed to these two moments and how they are remembered. And while he expands on this in the epilogue, it would have been intriguing to hear more from the author about his thoughts on the role memory plays in this history, even if this was not his primary objective in writing this book.

Catholics on the Barricades raises compelling questions about the Latin American counterpart to this story: the rise of liberation theology. This is not a major theme of the book, although Kosicki does mention it several times (224; 312-313). It is certainly an important research agenda for students of the global Church, since some proponents of liberation theology, although committed to their set of local concerns in Latin America, were shaped by their experiences and training in Western Europe. Scholars are finding many connections between France and the Americas.[8] A future scholar could take up the question of this global circulation of ideas regarding worker priests and pastoral work, between Poland, France, and Latin America. For example, in his chapter on the intellectual formation of the Reverend Karol Wojtyła, or the future Pope John Paul II, Kosicki argues that both Wojtyła's dissertation on Thomism and his travels to Western Europe shaped Karol's ideas on pastoral work and worker priests. Why did Wojtyła and Latin American priests have such different takeaways? In his chapter about Wojtyła's intellectual trajectory and how he broke away from the Catholic socialists of the pro-Soviet *Dziś i Jutro*, Kosicki, in a way, helps answer the question of why Pope John Paul II opposed liberation theology a few decades later. While a few studies have begun to explore this question, they tend to first look to Wojtyła's experience in Communist Poland, as opposed to his intellectual biography.[9]

---

[5] Brian Porter-Szücs, *Faith and Fatherland: Catholicism, Modernity, and Poland* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011).

[6] Agata Kosciańska, "*Humanae vitae*, birth control and the forgotten history of the Catholic Church in Poland," in Ed. Alana Harris, *The Schism of '68: Catholicism, Contraception and Humanae Vitae in Europe, 1945-1975* (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018).

[7]. Piotr H. Kosicki, "The Catholic 1968: Poland, Social Justice, and the Global Cold War," *Slavic Review* 77:3 (Fall 2018): 638-660.

[8] Olivier Chatelan, "A Global History Through the Prism of Student-Priest Circulations Between Europe and Latin America, 1950-1980," Jaime Pensado, "Pax Romana and the Radicalization of Latin American Catholic Students: From the Two World Wars to the Global Sixties," Gilles Routhier, "The Circulations: Building Relationships between Latin America and North America," and Carolina Sappia "Circulations Within Catholicism: Europe and Latin America, 1869-1978." These papers were presented at the Global History and Catholicism Conference, University of Notre Dame, 6-9 April 2019.

[9] For example, scholars have looked at the Pope John Paul II's stance against the Nicaraguan Revolution. See John Kirk, "John Paul II and the Exorcism of Liberation Theology: A Retrospective Look at the Pope in Nicaragua," *Bulletin of Latin American Research* 4:1 (1985): 33-47; Ricardo Peter, "Reflections on the Nicaraguan Revolution and the Holy See in the 1980s," in Peter C. Kent and J.F. Pollard, eds., *Papal Diplomacy in the Modern Age* (Westport: Praeger 1994), 245-251. For the Vatican approach to liberation theology and

My own research is about reproductive issues and the Church, and especially the origins and circulation of *Humanae Vitae*. Kosicki does not address these issues much, even though it seems clear that the Polish story, and more broadly the encounter between Catholicism and Communism, is central to it. After all, one of the century's key thinkers on Catholic sexuality was Wojtyła. Just four years after the time frame Kosicki focuses on, Wojtyła published his influential text on marriage and love, *Love and Responsibility* in 1960 which would later lead to his famous theology of the body that shaped the global Church in the latter half of the twentieth century.[10] Other scholars like Kosciańska have shown how Wojtyla's personal experiences shaped his ideas about human sexuality. Did the French thinkers, if at all, shape his ideas about gender and sexuality? Future studies could take up this question.

Once again, Kosicki's monograph is a landmark volume, which all scholars of global Catholicism should read. It exemplifies the benefits of a transnational lens, demonstrating how the exchange of Catholic thought between Polish and French Catholic intellectuals shaped ideas about revolution, especially for the pluralistic, Catholic intellectual world of Poland. For the student of global Catholicism, it perhaps raises more questions than it answers. That, though, is the mark of an excellent volume.

Communism more generally, see Peter Hebblethwaite, "The Popes and Politics: Shifting Patterns in 'Catholic Social Doctrine,'" *Daedalus* 111:1, Religion (Winter 1982) 85-99; John M. Kramer, "The Vatican's Ostpolitik," *The Review of Politics* 42:3 (1980): 283-308.

[10] For recent edition see John Paul II, *Love and Responsibility* (Boston: Pauline Books, 2013).

Review by Rachel Johnston-White, University of Groningen

How did the Catholic Church come to advocate dignity and personhood for all people, not just its own faithful? And why have so many within the Church continued to resist that universalism, choosing instead to use their religion as a weapon against those they perceive as enemies or outsiders? Piotr H. Kosicki's engagingly written and meticulously researched monograph, *Catholics on the Barricades: Poland, France, and "Revolution," 1891-1956*, reshapes our understanding of Catholicism in twentieth-century Europe by investigating a transnational group of Catholic intellectuals in Poland and France. Kosicki introduces us to "a world in which debates on personhood and social justice were consistently front and center" (83). For the often deeply spiritual Polish and French Catholics who are the subjects of this narrative, faith and politics were inextricable. Mediating the two was a set of ideas: on the one hand, experiments in Catholic thought and theology drawn from Thomas Aquinas via renowned French Catholic philosopher Jacques Maritain, Catholic social teaching beginning with Pope Leo XIII's 1891 encyclical *Rerum Novarum*, and the "personalism" of Emmanuel Mounier, founder of the influential journal *Esprit*, and, on the other hand, Marxism. These Catholics believed fervently in their cause of remaking society in order to uphold the "dignity" of the "human person." Nothing short of revolution, with all that that entailed, was required for this project to succeed. Theirs was a revolution "with pens and typewriters," but for many of Kosicki's central figures, words had tangible consequences when deployed in support of "exclusionary (or integral) nationalism, and then Stalinism as well" (3). From 1939 to 1956, this revolution inspired resistance to Nazism, new methods of evangelization, radical and even heretical theologies, and criticism of the Holy Father himself, Pope Pius XII, on both sides of the Iron Curtain.

Kosicki traces three interconnected narrative arcs, each of which spans the period from *Rerum Novarum* to the end of Stalinism. The first analyses how Catholic intellectuals in France and Poland grappled with Marxism as an ideology and, later, as a political system in Stalinist Poland; theirs, on the whole, was an ideological journey. The second investigates pastoral innovations, particularly related to the pressing challenge of how to minister to the de-Christianized working classes.[11] This second strand interweaves the "new theology" of French Dominican theologians Yves Congar and Marie-Dominique Chenu, the *Mission de France* and the worker-priest experiment of the 1940s and 1950s, and the transformative effects of these pastoral reforms on the young Karol Wojtyla, the future Pope John Paul II.[12] Connecting the two is the third strand: the influence of Catholic personalism, as put forward by Maritain and his younger, more radical disciple Mounier. Personalism offered Catholics a philosophy at once profoundly spiritual and inherently political. It was based upon a return to the sources (literally, *ressourcement*) of Christianity—St. Augustine, Thomas Aquinas, and the Bible itself; yet it also transcended the intellectual realm, calling on Catholics to help bring about a more just society here on earth in order to protect and promote the "human person" (10).

In both France and Poland, the Second World War challenged the "strict, top-down control historically exercised by bishops," opening the way to "a different approach to Catholicism" defined by intellectual activism and a greater role for the laity (96). While personalism had made inroads among the Catholic vanguard in both countries by the 1930s, thanks to the dissemination of Maritain's writings and—in France—the "overnight sensation" that was the journal *Esprit* (55), the war raised the stakes for anti-fascist Catholics. Suddenly, clandestine reading groups and secret lectures by university professors in Poland acquired the weight of "civic duty" (78); Mounier quickly became an "ethical guide" in Polish Catholic resistance circles, especially for the young adults "expected to assume extraordinary responsibilities in society" (79, 74). In France, meanwhile, a small army of intrepid volunteers circulated the clandestine journal *Cahiers du Témoignage chrétien*, which had

[11] Henri Godin and Yvan Daniel, *La France, Pays de Mission?* (Paris: Cerf, 1943).

[12] In his discussion of the Mission de France (French Mission), the work of Sybille Chapeu might have been usefully cited, though the period it investigates mostly postdates the story Kosicki tells. Chapeu, *Des chrétiens dans la guerre d'Algérie: L'action de la Mission de France* (Paris: Les Éditions de l'Atelier/Éditions Ouvrières, 2004).

been founded by Jesuit priests who called upon Christians to engage in spiritual resistance to Nazism.[13] The war also opened the way for practical cooperation between Communists, Socialists, and Catholics in ways that had appealed to only a tiny group of radical Catholics before 1939.

The heart of book, however, begins with the onset of the Cold War and the Stalinization of Poland. Kosicki traces the demise of Christian Democracy in Poland and its replacement with a new model of political Catholicism: Catholic socialism. As Poland turned Communist, the weekly journal *Dzis i Jutro* ("Today and Tomorrow") rapidly came to occupy a predominant place in the Catholic political landscape. Led by former fascist Boleslaw Piasecki, the young Catholic idealists of the movement became "Poland's first Catholic socialists, putting the 'human person' at the service of Marxist revolution for religious, as well as ethnonational, reasons" (135). Kosicki shows how this experiment in a Catholic-Marxist fusion "had a serious impact on Catholic agendas on both sides of the Iron Curtain" (301). In France, the Catholic vanguard—led by Mounier, along with his editorial assistant at *Esprit*, Jean-Marie Domenach, and veteran of *Témoignage chrétien* and anti-colonial activist André Mandouze—looked to Poland as the embodiment of the personalist revolution they so desired (301). French Catholic intellectuals visited Poland on numerous occasions and met with local Catholic activists; Mounier quickly declared his admiration for *Dzis i Jutro,* the most radical of the groups, even when that movement threw its moral weight behind the new Stalinist regime to the point of excusing the state imprisonment of Catholic bishops. As Kosicki incisively puts it, "Mounier's loyalty to 'revolution' was so total that he ultimately proved willing to sacrifice the dignity of individual persons in the service of Soviet collectivism" (142). Mounier died of a heart attack in March 1950 at the age of 44 before ever acknowledging his mistake.

Between 1952 and 1955, however, the young writers for *Dzis i Jutro*—now part of a movement rechristened as PAX—started to take "seriously the evident contradictions between Catholic metaphysics and Marxist pluralism" (286). For Tadeusz Mazowiecki (who would later become Poland's first non-Communist prime minister in 1989), Janusz Zablocki, and their like-minded colleagues, this belated realization led them to abandon their earlier moral and political rigidity in favor of plurality and openness to dialogue. They ceased to defend Stalinism and criticized both the theology and the thinly veiled political aspirations of their erstwhile leader Piasecki, who, along with the true believers of *Dzis i Jutro* and later PAX, had been all too willing to sell "personhood out to autocracy" (301). The experiment in Catholic socialism did, however, foster the emergence of humanist and revisionist politics in Poland, which were taken up by Catholic and Marxist activists alike after de-Stalinization. Decades later, some of these same Catholic socialists—now 'deradicalized'—put their commitment to the rights of the human person into practice with the Solidarity trade union.

Karol Wojtyla, the future Pope John Paul II, is, for Kosicki, the central figure of the non-Marxist side of this story: the "personalist revolution" (310). Personalism eventually led Wojtyla to a recognition of the humanity and personhood of all people, whether Catholic believers or not (310). Wojtyla never so much as flirted with Catholic socialism, and unlike the radicals of *Dzis I Jutro* or the intellectuals of *Esprit*, he rejected the idea that revolution could only be accomplished by embracing Marxism. Yet he, too, was profoundly marked by French Catholic thought, especially the 'new theology' that inspired the Mission de France and the worker-priest movement. The call for Catholics—both laity and clergy—to go out and engage with workers in the places where they lived and worked resonated with him to the point that he extended a visit to Belgium in order to act as a temporary replacement pastor for a Polish workers' community in Charleroi. This was, in effect, "an apprenticeship in the life of a worker-priest" (205). The worker-priest movement itself would not last long, falling victim to Pius XII's zeal for condemnations of any innovation bordering on progressivism, yet it greatly influenced Wojtyla's trajectory from the doctoral student of an archconservative mentor in Rome to the humanist pope he eventually became.

[13] On *Témoignage chrétien* during the Second World War, see François Bédarida and Renée Bédarida. *La Résistance spirituelle 1941-1944: Les Cahiers clandestins du temoignage chrétien* (Paris: Albin Michel, 2001); Renée Bédarida and François Bédarida, *Témoignage chrétien, 1941-1944: Les armes de l'esprit* (Paris: Les Éditions Ouvrières, 1977).

Catholics on the Barricades is a particularly successful contribution to a subgenre of intellectual and political history constructed around a collective biography of a movement's key figures and the ideas, beliefs, and ideals that they embraced. In his portrait of Polish and French intellectuals and their pursuit of 'revolution,' Kosicki draws evident inspiration from the work of Marci Shore, especially her first book *Caviar and Ashes*,[14] and the late Tony Judt's *Past Imperfect*, a masterful but rather less sympathetic exegesis of intellectuals and their ideals.[15] As such, the book makes extensive use of the publications of its major characters, supplemented by a thorough investigation of archival primary sources. Of the latter, most striking are the numerous letters between individuals based in Poland and France, tangible illustrations of the intellectual connections Kosicki so elegantly draws between the two countries. Kosicki deftly bridges Poland and France, showing how French Catholic thought influenced Polish Catholic intellectuals, and how Poland in turn decisively shaped how French Catholics understood Marxism, Stalinism, and the possibility of a revolutionary 'Catholic socialism.' Kosicki's monograph also forms part of a raft of excellent recent and forthcoming works investigating the role of religious people and figures in the construction of twentieth century thought and the political implications of these ideas. Alongside the work of James Chappel, Sarah Shortall, Udi Greenberg, Giuliana Chamedes, Sam Moyn, and Marco Duranti, among others, Kosicki makes a compelling case that the history of the European twentieth century cannot be understood without reference to Christianity.[16]

Kosicki has a remarkable ability to bring his cast of characters to life. Choice quotations capture vivid snapshots of personality, as in the opening image of Jean-Marie Domenach, then the editor of *Esprit*, reveling in the news of Pius XII's death: "The Stalin of the Church is dead. It is a joy" (1); or Polish writer Czesław Miłosz commenting that he and writer Jerzy Andrzejewski "confessed to each other that the asceticism and the depth and nobility of spiritual self-reflection awakened only our appetites for vodka and juicy steaks" (71). Such wry moments make this no ordinary work of intellectual history, for the book presents these figures as sincere, deeply flawed, yet utterly human people. Kosicki is sympathetic to the genuine concerns they held—a desire for peace and fear of nuclear warfare; a thirst for a more just world; deep spirituality—while never holding back from critiquing their choices when justified.

One of the major arguments of the book is that the personalist 'revolution' advocated not only by Polish Catholic socialists but also by their French counterparts was doomed to failure from the outset, because it adopted an exclusionary definition of personhood. That is, certain categories of people—Jews, Germans, non-Catholics, perceived enemies of Marxism—were not endowed with personhood or the human dignity that accompanied it. This assertion is the key to Kosicki's interpretation of personalism and its political implications, yet I sensed some tension in this argument throughout the book. On the one hand, Kosicki argues that the expression of ideology depends upon historical contingency; that is, the context in which personalism evolved, and the political and personal circumstances of the Catholics who grappled with personalism, determined its meaning at a given time or place (13). On the other hand, personalism appears to have certain fixed, albeit contradictory, properties. First, personalism holds the promise of universal recognition of the human dignity of others. This is the conclusion that the future Pope John Paul II drew in the wake of Vatican II. But Kosicki also repeatedly suggests

[14] Marci Shore, *Caviar and Ashes: A Warsaw Generation's Life and Death in Marxism, 1918-1968* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006).

[15] Tony Judt, *Past Imperfect: French Intellectuals, 1944-1956* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1992).

[16] James Chappel, *Catholic Modern: The Challenge of Totalitarianism and the Remaking of the Church* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2018); Sarah Shortall, *Soldiers of God in a Secular World: The Politics of Catholic Theology in Twentieth-Century France* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, forthcoming); Udi Greenberg, "Catholics, Protestants, and the Violent Birth of European Religious Pluralism," *American Historical Review* (April 2019): 511-538 and "Protestants, Decolonization, and European Integration, 1885-1961," *Journal of Modern History* 89 (June 2017): 314-354; Giuliana Chamedes, *A Twentieth-Century Crusade: The Vatican's Battle to Remake Christian Europe* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2019); Samuel Moyn, *Christian Human Rights* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2015); and Marco Duranti, *The Conservative Human Rights Revolution: European Identity, Transnational Politics, and the Origins of the European Convention* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017).

that personalism had "total"—even totalitarian—aspects inherent to it as a politico-spiritual ideology. This dark side of personalism "poisoned" the revolution from the outset (4), with integral nationalism, ethnonational hatred, and even anti-Semitism not so much a flaw but a feature of personalism on both sides of the Iron Curtain. How, then, should we reconcile historical contingency with personalism as a spiritual and political ideology? In other words, to what extent are universal and/or exclusionary elements integral to personalism as a philosophy, or are they contingent upon the historical circumstances of the actors that embraced personalism? Perhaps, given the vagueness of personalism as an ideology—which is undoubtedly compounded by the shifting politics of Mounier himself—such a distinction is impossible. Kosicki clearly recognizes these contradictions of personalist philosophy, sometimes referring to personalism in the plural, as "personalisms," as a way around this issue (10, 23, 46, 60).

Linked to the argument about the dark side of personalism is the strong critique Kosicki offers of French and Polish radical Catholics who "chose the legacy of the real Stalin" over the ecclesiastical hierarchy of the Church (258). According to Kosicki, "the imperative of waging 'revolution' warranted dissent from the Vatican" for these Catholics, some of whom saw fit to excuse the imprisonment of bishops in Stalinist Poland (277). Kosicki argues that this misguided obsession with 'revolution,' and the accompanying belief that the ends of social justice and personhood justified nearly any means to achieve them, led to these grave errors. In France, resentment at the suppression of the 'new theology' and the worker-priest movement also played a role, with the writers of *Esprit* fully expecting to be next on the list of condemnations handed down from the Vatican (258). One of the many strengths of *Catholics on the Barricades* is its investigation of the intellectual and spiritual processes by which this minority of Catholic activists concluded that they could still "call themselves 'Catholic' while flouting the Vatican's Cold War policy" (172). Yet I would suggest that Kosicki has somewhat misread the reasons for the strong anti-authoritarian streak of French Catholic radicals. The events of the Second World War proved decisive in this respect, for two reasons. The first is that, through cooperation in resistance organizations like *Témoignage chrétien*, Protestant theology on the state and authority started to influence Catholic activism. Secondly, Catholic radicals perceived the actions of the French Catholic hierarchy during the war as an unforgivable betrayal and abdication of responsibility. Both trends facilitated Catholic activists' subsequent rejection of ecclesiastical authority.

As Kosicki notes, the most important figures of the French Catholic vanguard had transformative experiences in the anti-Nazi and anti-Vichy resistance during the Second World War. Some, like Mounier, started off on the wrong side and therefore, to quote Tony Judt, "did not have a 'good war'."[17] Others, like the Catholics of the *Témoignage chrétien* movement, took a clear stand against anti-Semitism in the April 1942 issue of the journal; they were, importantly, also influenced by Protestant thought on resistance, especially that of Swiss theologian Karl Barth, whose writings were translated and disseminated in France by Swiss pastor Roland de Pury, the most influential Protestant to work alongside the Jesuit founders of the *Cahiers du Témoignage chrétien*.[18] Including Protestantism in this story—at least on the French side, given the religious homogeneity of postwar Poland—might have opened up new perspectives on the dramatic transformation of Catholicism that Kosicki traces. It was precisely in this period that intellectual and practical collaboration across denominational divides began in earnest, with consequences for both politics and theology.[19]

[17] Judt, 89.

[18] Patrick Cabanel, "Les protestants français" in Denis Pelletier and Jean-Louis Schlegel, eds., *À la gauche du Christ: Les chrétiens de gauche en France de 1945 à nos jours* (Paris: Seuil, 2012): 181.

[19] While research examining European Catholicism alongside Protestantism is somewhat lacking, some recent work including Darcie Fontaine, *Decolonizing Christianity: Religion and the End of Empire in France and Algeria* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016); Moyn, *Christian Human Rights*; Pelletier and Schlegel, *À la gauche du Christ*; Sabine Rousseau, *La colombe et le napalm: des chrétiens français contre les guerres d'Indochine et du Vietnam: 1945-1975* (Paris: CNRS Éditions, 2002); and Limore Yagil, *Chrétiens et juifs sous Vichy, 1940-1944: sauvetage et désobéissance civile* (Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 2005) show how French Protestants and Catholics were in dialogue on many of the most pressing issues of the day, including anti-Nazi resistance, Marxism, human rights, and the question of decolonization. My own work takes up these lines of inquiry to show how a "Protestantization" of Catholic conscience took

No matter the ambiguities of their own wartime trajectories, French Catholic radicals all agreed on the moral deficiencies of the Catholic hierarchy in France. Although five bishops and archbishops issued denunciations of French deportations of Jews, this did not spare them from criticism by the Catholic resistance after the Liberation. André Mandouze addressed a letter to Monsignor Jean Delay, Bishop of Marseille and one of the five who protested the treatment of Jews, that "if a certain number of your sons had not had the courage to disobey you for four years to obey their conscience, neither you, nor the greater part of your colleagues would currently occupy your episcopal palaces."[20] Domenach shared these views, as Kosicki notes, writing of the "many young Christians obliged to rely on their consciences and sometimes even to challenge the directives of certain bishops" (70). These same bishops had, on many occasions, sought to discredit the *Témoignage chrétien* movement, calling its founders "theologians without a mandate" and warning the Catholic faithful against what they called "anonymous propaganda."[21] Catholic radicals therefore had ample reason to consider both the French hierarchy and the Vatican morally bankrupt after the war. I would suggest that it was this perception of an ecclesiastical failure of leadership during the war that provided the necessary conditions for Catholic radicals like Mandouze, Domenach, and others to feel justified in rebelling against the institutional Church on matters of conscience. This is not to excuse their seemingly willful blindness to the Stalinist regime, but rather to contextualize their stance in light of the equally real collaboration of much of the Catholic hierarchy with the Vichy regime and even the Nazi occupation.

These quibbles in interpretation do not, however, detract from the remarkable achievements of Kosicki's narrative. *Catholics on the Barricades* is a vital contribution to ongoing debates on the influence of religious thought and practice on politics and society across Europe. Kosicki deftly shows how the spiritual and intellectual battles his actors waged within and amongst themselves shaped the world around them far beyond the confines of activist circles in Poland and France. Though Catholic socialism failed disastrously to bring about a revolution for social justice, the legacy of personalism transformed how the contemporary Catholic Church defines personhood; no longer the sole preserve of Catholics, it now encompasses all people. Yet Kosicki also shows that some of the challenges mid-twentieth century Catholics faced have not altogether vanished. Nationalism is on the rise again and with it, the same exclusionary impulses that fueled the religious, ethnic, and national hatreds of the early and mid-twentieth century. Kosicki suggests that personalism has, in the past, acted as a double-edged sword, enabling both exclusion and inclusion. The institutional Church itself likewise contains within it both defenders of Vatican II and its increasingly empowered critics. Whether Catholics and the Church opt on balance for radical interpersonal solidarity or a return to exclusionary integralism remains an essential question.

---

place in France from the 1930s to the 1960s. On this, see Rachel Johnston-White, "A New Primacy of Conscience? Conscientious Objection, French Catholicism and the State during the Algerian War," *Journal of Contemporary History* 54:1 (January 2019): 112-138.

[20] Quoted in Gérard Cholvy and Yves-Marie Hilaire, *Religion et société en France: 1914-1945* (Toulouse: Privat, 2002): 251.

[21] CNAEF, 2CE–SGA–Action Catholique Française. Fonds de Mgr Courbe (1931-1958). Box 2CE 1019–Positions de l'épiscopat sous l'occupation (1941-1945). ACA, « Extrait du Procès-Verbal de l'ACA, » 28-29 July 1943, 5.

Review by Albert Wu, American University of Paris

Others will have, and have had, much more to say about the ways in which Piotr Kosicki's path-breaking book revises and enhances our understanding of Poland's tragic twentieth century.[22] I will focus my commentary here on how Kosicki's book can serve as a model for opening new vistas in other fields of study, namely the global history of Catholicism. In chapter six, Kosicki tells the story of the young Karol Wojtyla, later Pope John Paul II, traveling in the summer of 1947 throughout western Europe. A Ph.D. student studying in Rome, Wojtyla embarked on a tour of Catholic pastoral life in France, Belgium, and the Netherlands. During his travels, Wojtyla came in touch with and became enchanted with the "worker-priest" movement. Seeking to stem the tide of the ravages of industrial capitalism, these worker-priests sought to gain the trust of workers by working alongside them. They removed their clerical collars and became embedded in factories. Wojtyla found the approach a "revelation" (206).

Wojtyla's attraction to the worker-priest movement was partly personal—during World War II he had worked in a limestone quarry and in a chemical factory. But it was, as Kosicki shows, also driven by his academic encounter with the broad theological movement of personalism. In Rome, Wojtyla came under the supervision of the influential French Dominican theologian Réginald Garrigou-Lagrange, a neo-Thomist who had once been close to the circle of French personalist theologians, namely Jacques Maritain, Marie-Dominique Chenu, and Yves Congar. By the 1940s, however, Garrigou-Lagrange had turned against these ideas, referring to them derogatorily as a *nouvelle théologie*, a departure from orthodox positions that was not far from heresy. Garrigou-Lagrange was a distant yet imposing figure, but Wojtyla gained from Garrigou-Lagrange a strong interest in the theology of personalism, which, as Kosicki carefully shows, fueled willingness to experiment with new pastoral approaches (202).

The episode with the young future Pope points to two central themes that occupy Kosicki's work. The first is the importance of transnational intellectual exchange in underpinning the development of twentieth-century Polish Catholic thought. In particular, he traces the deep connections between French and Polish Catholic intellectuals that were rooted in the late nineteenth century, when Polish Catholics saw Gallicanism as a model for their own church governance. Intellectual exchange accelerated in the interwar years, when French personalism arrived in Poland through the intellectual circles surrounding Jacques Maritain and Emmanuel Mounier, two of the most important French Catholic philosophers of the twentieth century. Mounier, through his journal *Esprit*, gained a wide following in Poland—by the 1940s, Kosicki shows, "Polish readership of Mounier was widespread" (82-83).

Mounier was able to garner such a following because of his engagement with the central problems of the interwar period. Observing the crisis of interwar liberalism, the rise of fascism, and the disarray of Christian democratic parties, Mounier sought to create a Catholic socialist movement that transcended the political categories of his time. Kosicki argues that Mounier engaged in particular with the central problem of nineteenth and twentieth-century world history: the question of "revolution." Side-stepping the theoretical minefield of loaded terms like 'modernity' and "modernism,' Kosicki's focus on the idea of "revolution" is an inspired one.[23] It allows him to show that Catholics were centrally concerned with questions of social justice and the inequalities brought about by industrial capitalism. But at the same time, he shows that Catholic thinkers positioned themselves differently in relation to the question of how far the "revolution" should go. Mounier, Kosicki shows, was no friend to Marxism, but he "came to believe unequivocally in a commonality of Catholic and socialist interests" (56). Kosicki's book explores a whole cast of characters—including, among others, Tadeusz Mazowiecki, one of

[22] See, for example, John Connelly's rich reflections in "The Polish Predicament," *Los Angeles Review of Books*, 18 November 2018, https://lareviewofbooks.org/article/the-polish-predicament/.

[23] For a debate over the question of Catholicism's engagement with modernity, see the exchange between Giuliana Chamedes and James Chappel in the recent H-Diplo roundtable review of James Chappel's *Catholic Modern: The Challenge of Totalitarianism and the Remaking of the Church*, https://issforum.org/roundtables/PDF/Roundtable-XX-9.pdf.

the prominent Catholic writers in the 1950s who became a leader in the Solidarity movement and prime minister of Poland in 1989—who sought to reconcile Catholicism and non-Soviet forms of socialism.

This focus on in-between figures—on Catholics who sought to move between the poles of orthodox conservatism and broadly defined left-leaning revolution—is an important historiographical insight. In this way, Kosicki's book joins a spate of recent work that has highlighted the dynamism and wide-ranging influence of Catholic international thought and political action.[24] Here, Kosicki's major contribution is to shows a dense network of Polish and French Catholic intellectuals who not only embraced revolution but openly called for it.

The focus on these in-between figures could have far-reaching consequences for how we approach the history of Christianity in China. After the Communist victory in 1949, Chinese Catholics faced similar dilemmas as their Polish counterparts after the victory of Communism. Should they 'collaborate' with the Communist regime? Or should they resist the attempt by the state to co-opt church institutions? How did this conflict between church and state generate new approaches to theology? Both within the Western popular press and the historiography, this period of Catholic thought in China has been much overlooked.[25] When Catholics have been written about, much of the focus been on the so-called 'underground' Church, or Catholics who refused to submit to the approval of the Communist Party. The Cold War historiography of Catholicism in China encouraged such a binary approach.

Yet the history of the 1950s reveals a series of characters who importantly navigated the poles between Catholicism and Chinese Communism. Take, for instance, the career of the Aloysius Jin Luxian, one of the most controversial figures within twentieth-century Chinese Catholicism. Born in Shanghai in 1916, Jin joined the Jesuit order in 1938 and was ordained in 1946. After spending several years in Europe, he returned to China in 1951. In 1955, during the infamous roundup of September 8, he was arrested along with several hundreds of Catholics. For the next twenty-seven years, denounced as a counterrevolutionary, Jin was confined in various prisons and detentions camps.

When he was released from prison in 1982, he returned to a divided Chinese Catholic landscape split by bishops ordained by the state-led Catholic Patriotic Association and the 'underground Church,' led by bishops ordained by the Vatican but considered anathema to the Chinese Communist Party. Jin argued for accommodation with the Communist-led Catholic Patriotic Association, and in 1988, he became bishop of the Shanghai diocese. Many Catholics within the underground church and abroad labeled him a traitor, a crypto-Communist.[26]

Connections with Kosicki's story offer us a different way to understand Jin's career, one that moves us beyond the binary of 'resistance' and collaboration.' The same summer that Karol Wojtyla was traveling through France, Jin also arrived in Paris to begin his Tertianship in the Jesuit order. In Paris, Jin visited his fellow Jesuit Pierre Teilhard de Chardin and learned of how Garrigou-Lagrange had denounced Teilhard de Chardin in a series of writings. But the moment that moved him the

[24] A non-comprehensive list of recent works include John Connelly, *From Enemy to Brother: The Revolution in Catholic Teaching on the Jews, 1933–1965* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2012); Samuel Moyn, *Christian Human Rights* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2015); James Chappel, *Catholic Modern: The Challenge of Totalitarianism and the Remaking of the Church* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2018); Giuliana Chamedes, *A Twentieth-Century Crusade: The Vatican's Battle to Remake Christian Europe* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2019).

[25] As Chloe Starr writes, "histories and narratives of Christianity often gloss over the early decades of the PRC, eager to compare the revival of the 1980s with the vibrant 1930s or look to the uplifting stories of the martyrs." See Chloe Starr, *Chinese Theology: Text and Context* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2016), 155.

[26] For a good overview of Jin' career, see Adam Minter, "Keeping Faith: Jin Luxian's 50-year struggle to keep Catholicism Alive in China, balance Rome and Beijing, and Build a Church for '100 Million Catholics'" *The Atlantic Monthly* (July/August, 2007), https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2007/07/keeping-faith/305990/.

most in his trip came in Lyon, when he encountered a Jesuit worker-priest. The worker-priest's speech, Jin writes, "inspired me and has remained with me." In his memoirs, Jin came away from the encounter believing that "we should join the workers, use our bodies as witness, spread the Gospel anew and give rise to a worker-priest movement."[27]

Jin's biography, coupled with Kosicki's story, points us to a collective generational experience for the Catholic leaders who came of age in the 1940s and were to become leaders of the church in the 1980s. Here was a generation bound together by their experiences of suffering under the ravages of far-right militarism—in Wojtyla's case, the Nazis, and in Jin's case, Japanese militarism. We see in both Wojtyła and Jin' biography a global moment when a certain strand of global Catholicism earnestly sought to bring together the complementary strands between Catholicism and socialism. Kosicki's close reading of *Dzis i Jutro*, or PAX, is particularly useful for helping us think through this moment in global Catholic history. Kosicki takes seriously the thought of the controversial Boleslaw Piasecki, the fascist turned apologist for the Stalinist regime. Considered a "political hack" within the traditional historiography, Piasecki emerges in Kosicki's careful account as both a political opportunist and an intellectual seeking to produce a "new foundation for understanding the value of human work," leaving a profound "mark on European Catholic intellectual life" (282). Kosicki's rigorous yet empathetic approach can serve as a guide for future scholars of journals and publications produced by the Chinese Patriotic Church Association during the same period.

One can imagine several other ways in which scholars can build on Kosicki's study. The first would be to expand, or at least to compare, the geographical scope of the Catholic engagement with "revolution." Kosicki's main story is to explore the French-Polish axis, but future scholars will do well to further probe the different global nodes in which personalism and the attention to "revolution" traveled. Kosicki is right to focus on the importance of France – in the case of Jin and Wojtyla, we see how France of the interwar years and the immediate postwar period served as an important nodal point for these young Catholic intellectuals, who in the 1970s and 1980s were to become important leaders within the church. But the case of Jin also point us to yet more possible transnational connections—between Krakow and Shanghai, for instance—that future scholars can explore.

One wonders, for instance, how the story of French-Polish personalism weaves its way into the decolonizing movements of the 1950s. As Elizabeth Foster's wonderful new book *African Catholic* shows, Emmanuel Mounier was a key figure in the intellectual trajectory of Alioune Diop, a member of the Negritude movement who later became an important figure in shaping the policies of the Second Vatican Council.[28] Do the Polish Catholic socialists play a part in this story? As more scholars are turning towards the story of Catholicism's engagement with decolonization, one wonders what new transnational intellectual exchanges will be uncovered. Future scholars can perhaps map out a different global intellectual landscape of the Catholic left, with nodes in Shanghai, Lima, Dakar, Rio de Janeiro, and Krakow. Future scholars can examine whether a story exists without France as the central axis that shaped intellectual networks, but rather as one center among many.

Another way to engage with Kosicki's story would be to extend its chronology. Kosicki's main account ends in 1955, showing how the possible *rapprochement* between Catholicism and socialism was short lived. By 1954, the Vatican had pronounced the worker-priest movement heterodox. Wojtyla himself found the movement limited, and is widely credited as one of the key figures in helping to bring about the downfall of Communism in Eastern Europe. Kosicki draws out some of the possible strands that can be used to carry this story up to the 1980s. He mentions in passing the return of xenophobia,

[27] See *The Memoirs of Jin Luxian: Volume One: Learning and Relearning, 1916-1982*, translated by William Hanbury-Tenison and introduced by Anthony E. Clark (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2012), 101-102.

[28] Elizabeth Foster, *African Catholic: Decolonization and the Transformation of the Church* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2019).

anti-Semitism, and anti-Germanism in Poland. But one is left to wonder—why was this connection between Catholicism and socialism so fragile and so short-lived?

Future scholars, of course, will have to expand on the story after the middle of the 1950s. But what is clear is that those interested in the history of modern Catholicism and modern European history are in Kosicki's debt. They will have to contend with Kosicki's rich and complex tale of Catholic theological engagement with socialism. One hopes that they can create new works that are as rigorous, expansive, and stimulating as *Catholics on the Barricades*.

Response by Piotr H. Kosicki, University of Maryland

In the twentieth century, Roman Catholics looking to remake the secular world into a just society had a profound impact on the international order. I count myself fortunate to have come through graduate school contemporaneously with a loosely defined cohort of scholars (most, from outside the confessional fold) who have explored that impact. Samuel Moyn's work on personalism and human rights and Wolfram Kaiser's work on Christian Democracy inspired many of us well before 2010.[29] Over the past decade, scholars like Kathleen Sprows Cummings, Stefanos Geroulanos, Peter Gordon, John McGreevy, Jan-Werner Müller, Camille Robcis, and Sarah Shortall have undertaken creative initiatives to engage, promote, and expand upon this work.[30] As Ph.D. dissertations have given way to first books, a vibrant cross-generational scholarly conversation has ensued. Research that might once have been consigned to a confessional historiographical ghetto now bridges religious divides (and the secular-sacred divide) and spreads new insights into anti-Semitism, ecumenical dialogue, missionary activity, and religious reform.[31]

I commend the editors of H-Diplo for tackling these subjects and thereby helping to normalize them as worthy food for thought in the domains of diplomatic, international, and transnational/global history. H-Diplo has already featured forums on the ground-breaking volumes by my friends and cohort colleagues James Chappel and Giuliana Chamedes.[32] I am very grateful to H-Diplo's Diane Labrosse for organizing the present forum, to Daniel Steinmetz-Jenkins for having proposed my book, and to Sarah Shortall for writing the introduction to the forum. I, a transnational Europeanist specializing in France and Poland, am honored to respond here to three historians with deep knowledge of contemporary Europe and equal, if not deeper, interest in the Global South. I owe Natalie Gasparowicz, Rachel Johnston-White, and Albert Wu a great debt of thanks for their meticulous readings of my work and for these thoughtful, and thought-provoking, essays. These are no mere book reviews, but important transnationalist thought pieces in their own right.

My underlying goal in writing *Catholics on the Barricades* was to explore how twentieth-century thinkers who were little-known (in most cases) to the wider world could, and did, find each other within and across national boundaries; form networks; and seize critical opportunities to transform ideas, institutions, and politics. The book's storyline rests on a

[29] Samuel Moyn, "Personalism, Community, and the Origins of Human Rights," in Stefan-Ludwig Hoffmann, ed., *Human Rights in the Twentieth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 85-106; Wolfram Kaiser, *Christian Democracy and the Origins of European Union* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007).

[30] I have in mind here, in particular, their (co-)organization of the following conferences and workshops: *Global History and Catholicism* (Notre Dame, 2019), *Political Catholicism* (NYU, 2015), *The Political Languages of Christian Democracy* (Princeton, 2012), *Theorizing Religion in Modern Europe* (Harvard, 2014).

[31] See, for example, Edward Baring, *Converts to the Real: Catholicism and the Making of Continental Philosophy* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2019); John Connelly, *From Enemy to Brother: The Revolution in Catholic Teaching on the Jews, 1933-1965* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2012); Marco Duranti, *The Conservative Human Rights Revolution: European Identity, Transnational Politics, and the Origins of the European Convention* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017); Udi Greenberg, "Catholics, Protestants, and the Violent Birth of European Religious Pluralism," *American Historical Review* 124:2 (2019): 511-538; David Hollinger, *Protestants Abroad: How Missionaries Tried to Change the World but Changed America* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2017); Piotr H. Kosicki, ed., *Vatican II behind the Iron Curtain* (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 2016); Sarah Shortall, *Soldiers of God in a Secular World: The Politics of Catholic Theology in Twentieth-century France* (under contract with Harvard University Press); Albert Monshan Wu, *From Christ to Confucius: German Missionaries, Chinese Christians, and the Globalization of Christianity, 1860-1950* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2016).

[32] James Chappel, *Catholic Modern: The Challenge of Totalitarianism and the Remaking of the Church* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2018); Giuliana Chamedes, *A Twentieth-century Crusade: The Vatican's Battle to Remake Christian Europe* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2019).

conceptual history of 'revolution' within the Catholic fold, but that concept was no monolith. Ironically, this H-Diplo forum has managed to de-center high politics in an attempt to map out what I have called a "pastoral revolution," built on the recognition "that the Catholic Church needed a dramatically new approach to saving souls: face-to-face dialogue built on a foundation of trust and solidarity" (206).

To be clear, then—my book is not just about Catholics who partnered, or even simply flirted, with Marxism. One of my principal contentions is that Catholic intellectuals' twentieth-century engagement with 'revolution' as idea and practice yielded not only imagined (often naïvely, if not mendaciously) political 'revolution,' but also a genuinely reformist agenda for the pastoral practices that represent the core reason for the Catholic Church's existence: evangelization in the service of saving souls.

None of the reviews in this forum challenges any core contention of my book; all pose a number of important questions, some intended to clarify, most intended to expand on my analysis. I see four intersecting vectors to be addressed. The first concerns Poland itself. The second goes to periodization. The third concerns the proper nomenclature for (Catholic) political behavior (conservative, progressive, *etc.*), to which I join the task of clarifying the meaning of 'personalism'—my protagonists' ideological code for the project of building a just society on earth. Personalism was not simply a smokescreen for the political ambitions of so-called 'left Catholics' (a term that I reject in my book). Their failure instead assured its legacy as a vehicle for facilitating social justice's transition out of the shadow of Soviet Communism and into global political economy and sexual politics. That transition is the fourth and final vector that I address here, taking the 1968 papal encyclical *Humanae Vitae* as my key reference point. As I have shown in a 2018 article in *Slavic Review*, key actors from the Franco-Polish personalist story of the 1950s 'de-Stalinized' after 1956 precisely by turning their focus to matters of race, sexuality, and the inequity of global resource distribution.[33]

Reflecting on the reviews in this roundtable has helped to remind me of why I got into this field in the first place. Though I belong to the larger cohort working on transnational Catholicism, I am, in fact, the only scholar trained to reconstruct and explain the global significance of Polish Catholicism. As Natalie Gasparowicz reminds us, historical scholarship at the intersection of Polish and Catholic history has often been nationalist to the point of insularity—if not outright self-marginalization. In my academic career, however, I have made a point of shining a light on lessons that modern Polish history holds for the wider world, and vice versa.[34] Polish Catholic history, it follows, is neither merely Polish nor merely Catholic, but rather an *histoire croisée* unto itself—transnational as much as national.

Traditionally, to the extent that English-language scholars addressed the relationship between French Catholic thought and Communist Poland, it was to draw a straight line from French personalism to the genesis of the *Solidarność* movement in August 1980.[35] In point of fact, however, the path of Polish personalists to Solidarity was neither linear nor uniform. Perhaps the most telling example is that of Tadeusz Mazowiecki: Catholic socialist, Solidarity co-founder, and prime minister who shepherded Poland in 1989 from Communism to the free market. By the time of *Solidarność*'s birth, Mazowiecki was working hard to forget that the roots of his public activism lay not in pastoral reform, but instead in Stalinist-era campaigns to "Christianize the Marxist revolution from within" (213). The answer to Gasparowicz's question about personalism, Solidarity, and memory, then, is that this was a memory deeply divided, and too quickly papered over—as is patently clear in the vitriol directed at Mazowiecki since 1989 as having sold out civic justice when as the last prime

[33] Kosicki, "The Catholic 1968: Poland, Social Justice, and the Global Cold War," *Slavic Review* 77:3 (2018): 638-660.

[34] For a key source of inspiration, see Brian Porter-Szűcs, *Poland in the Modern World: Beyond Martyrdom* (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2014).

[35] John Hellman, "The Prophets of Solidarity," *America*, 6 November 1982.

minister of Communist Poland he declared that "a thick line" should separate past from future.[36] Twenty-first-century Poland has witnessed the rise of a new politics of hate and exclusion, as its Catholic mainstream indulges anti-Semitism and battles LGBT rights, so-called 'genderism,' and civic pluralism writ large.

As to the periodization of *Catholics on the Barricades*, Rachel Johnston-White poses a provocative question about World War II and the transnational significance of Catholic-Protestant dialogue in France. Why not explore the agency of this dialogue in the Franco-Polish story? Simply put, when translated eastward within Europe, the Catholic-Protestant rapprochement follows an entirely different timeline. Protestant thought and ecumenical dialogue may have come into their own (on a limited scale) in interwar France, but in Poland this did not happen until the 1960s. As Udi Greenberg has recently contended in an important *American Historical Review* article, the narrative of "Catholic-Protestant peace," if it is to be told as genuinely pan-European or indeed even globally European, must be anchored in the postwar.[37]

Even though the Polish counterpart to that story shares some key protagonists with *Catholics on the Barricades*, notably, Mazowiecki, the terms differed substantially. Ecumenism, especially during the Second Vatican Council, began with an eastward opening to Orthodox theology, while Catholic-Protestant dialogue implied reconciliation with Germany. Perhaps the most important sources of inspiration for such dialogue were the writings of Dietrich Bonhoeffer, providing one of the cornerstones for the project of Polish-German reconciliation launched in the 1960s and 1970s by activists of Poland's Catholic Intelligentsia Clubs.[38] Mazowiecki would later 'finish' this work of reconciliation in 1990, as prime minister. Johnston-White references Karl Barth among other Protestant thinkers who shaped the ecumenical transformation of Catholicism in the intervening decades, and she is of course right—but the incubation period behind the Iron Curtain for those thinkers distinguishes this story from hers.

Albert Wu, in turn, asks how my book's story would change if I had ended it later. To understand the interlude between where I end *Catholics on the Barricades* (with de-Stalinization and the short-lived reformist hopes of 1956) and where the story of *Solidarność* begins, the vector of 'Poland and the world' is key. Until the 1950s, Poland's Catholic intellectuals had their gaze fixed squarely on Paris. But as Wu argues, why could they not have subsequently turned to Beijing, or—one might add—to Santiago, Accra, Manila, or elsewhere (making Paris but "one center among many," as Wu puts it)? After all, if not by 1956, then certainly by 1968, Paris had, in the eyes of even the most socialist of Polish personalists, shown itself to be home to all too many 'useful idiots.'[39]

Elsewhere I have told the story of what I call 'the Catholic 1968,' drawing on the remarkable story of the Polish Catholic legal thinker Ludwik Dembiński. Both a pastoral radical and a Catholic socialist, Dembiński nonetheless had no sympathy for countercultural challenges to Church teachings on sex and sexuality. He was in the unique position of chairing the first meetings of the international Catholic network Pax Romana to be held in the aftermath of *Humanae Vitae*, Pope Paul VI's encyclical confirming the Church's ban on artificial means of contraception. The outcome was an alliance with activists from across the Global South to defend the controversial encyclical in the face of North American and West European

[36] Kosicki, "After 1989: The Life and Death of the Catholic Third Way," *TLS—Times Literary Supplement*, 13 December 2013.

[37] Greenberg, "Catholics, Protestants, and the Violent Birth of European Religious Pluralism," 512.

[38] Kosicki, "*Caritas* across the Iron Curtain? Polish-German Reconciliation and the Bishops' Letter of 1965," *East European Politics and Societies* 23:2 (2009): 213-243; Annika Elisabet Frieberg, *Peace at All Costs: Catholic Intellectuals, Journalists, and Media in Postwar Polish-German Reconciliation* (New York: Berghahn, 2019).

[39] Tony Judt, *Past Imperfect: French Intellectuals, 1944-1956* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992); Richard Wolin, *The Wind from the East: French Intellectuals, the Cultural Revolution, and the Legacy of the 1960s* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010).

protest. The story of *Humanae Vitae*'s reception underscores the unique role that Communist Poland played within global Catholicism as both a laboratory of Catholic socialism and an intermediary between different visions of global political economy.[40]

By the same token, it is important not to exaggerate the 'progressivism' (more on this term in a moment) of Polish Catholics. In her review, for example, Natalie Gasparowicz cites the work of ethnographer Agnieszka Kościańska on Polish responses to *Humanae Vitae*. Kościańska sets out the bold thesis that "Not only did Poland and its Catholicism change over time, but the nature of these changes went in an opposite direction to those, which occurred in Western Europe. Rather than becoming less religious and more progressive, Poland has become more religious and more conservative, and HV [*Humanae Vitae*] has had a key part in the refashioning of that narrative."[41]

This is a thesis deserving of extensive and serious discussion, while my comments here can at best address Kościańska's work only *en passant*. Intuitively, her argument makes sense, and certainly *Humanae Vitae* represents some of the conceptual glue linking universal Church teaching with nationalist dogma in today's Poland. However, Kościańska's evidence for the premise of her claim—i.e. that Poland *started* out 'progressive' and only became 'conservative'—rests largely on a 1962 forum published in Tadeusz Mazowiecki's post-1956 journal *Więź* (Bond), including (among others) contributions by sexologists from Poland's Planned Parenthood Association.

Kościańska is right that the Catholic editors at *Więź* drew clear distinctions between abortion and birth control—but this is not at all to say that they would come out swinging against *Humanae Vitae*.[42] Mazowiecki later recalled that he had published the forum not because he agreed with it, but because his belief in the need for dialogue covered Planned Parenthood, too. It should not be a mystery, then, that his fellow Catholic journalist, patron bishop, and future pontiff, Karol Wojtyła, became one of the driving forces behind affirming *Humanae Vitae* as global dogma. In the 1950s and 1960s, when it came to matters of justice for the working poor (whether in Europe, or on a world scale) Wojtyła and his fellow Polish Catholic intellectuals were revolutionaries. But when it came to sexual politics, the vast majority held to the restrictive line pronounced by the Vatican since at least the 1930s.

This brings me to the matter of proper nomenclature for describing Catholic intellectual and political commitments. Throughout my academic career—as, I hope, *Catholics on the Barricades* makes clear—I have staunchly opposed the simple transposition of left-right secular political language onto the world of Catholic ideas. When I speak of 'progressive' Catholics, I do so in scare quotes, likewise to distinguish Catholic commitments to political 'revolution' (whether nationalist, or Communist, or both) from authentic reformism. I am well-aware that this type of punctuation implies a weighty normative intervention, and it is one that I affirm wholeheartedly. For example, I would respectfully question Rachel Johnston-White's description of Wojtyła's mentor Réginald Garrigou-Lagrange as 'archconservative'—a characterization that strikes me as a bit too secular. In *Catholics on the Barricades*, I describe Garrigou-Lagrange as an 'intransigentist,' following the classic parlance of French historian Émile Poulat (199).[43] While Johnston-White (rightly, of course) seeks to contrast Wojtyła with the intransigence of his Ph.D. thesis advisor, it is too easy to fall into the trap of using

[40] Kosicki, "The Catholic 1968," esp. 640.

[41] Agnieszka Kościańska, "*Humanae Vitae*, Birth Control, and the Forgotten History of the Catholic Church in Poland," in Alana Harris, ed., *The Schism of '68* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), 187-208, at 188.

[42] See, for example, "Kierunki etyki i współczesne pojmowanie wolności w życiu seksualnym," *Więź* no. 8 (1962): 153-156.

[43] Émile Poulat, *Église contre bourgeoisie* (Tournai: Castermann, 1977), 173-206.

terms that have also been applied (for the most part, polemically) to Wojtyła himself. However we judge him, Wojtyła, too, was an intransigentist when it came to sexual politics—just like his Dominican mentor.

I am especially pleased at how fully Johnston-White and Wu have engaged and embraced my conceptualization of 'revolution.' Gasparowicz poses an important extension question about ties between my story and that of Latin American liberation theology; the short answer is that it becomes all the more important when negotiating the process of cultural and intellectual translation between Latin America, Western Europe, and Eastern Europe to disaggregate the monolith of 'liberation theology.'[44] I would not go as far as Gerd-Rainer Horn in labeling certain among Western Europe's Dominicans and Jesuits of the 1930s and 1940s as makers of a "Western European liberation theology," but Horn's insights help us to understand how to probe the distinction between pastoral and political radicalism.[45] This, in turn, helps to explain how the pastoral revolutionary Wojtyła could have turned against Latin American theologians whose own visions of 'revolution,' as he understood them, had crossed the line into dangerous secular politics. As pope, Wojtyła believed that not Latin America, but the Polish example (especially after Solidarity's creation), should dictate the proper parameters for the Catholic understanding of a just society.

When it comes to 'personalism' itself, Rachel Johnston-White poses perhaps the toughest question of the entire forum. In her reading, personalism was "a double-edged sword, enabling both exclusion and inclusion." What she describes as the "dark side of personalism" leads her to ask: "How, then, should we reconcile historical contingency with personalism as a spiritual and political ideology?" She is, of course, entirely correct about the concept's internal tension. The simultaneous strength and weakness of 'personalism' as both a heuristic tool and an object of historical inquiry is its conceptual malleability, as Jacques Maritain himself famously observed.[46] As I see it, personalism implied a continuum of guidelines—some secular, some sacred—for interpreting and enacting 'revolution.' The personalist code was not static, yet it drew on certain unchanging textual foundations (the Gospels, *Summa Theologica*), which were then in turn supplemented by the writings of iconic Catholic thinkers like Maritain, Yves Congar, and (only for some on the personalist continuum) Emmanuel Mounier.

The basic takeaway is that personhood as a concept could be, and frequently was, made and remade as ideology according to contingent circumstance. For the young Wojtyła, the fact that (as he understood it) personhood was the purview only of believing Catholics was what necessitated Roman Catholicism's pastoral mission: to produce more persons in the world who would not only share in the promise of God's grace, but also become deserving of the secular dignity and rights due only to persons. In Poland, the "dark side of personalism" intersected first and foremost with anti-Semitism, but the Communist era both reinvented and incubated this "dark side," which survives to this day. By my reading, it is largely indistinguishable from integralism, i.e. the subordination of the community of rights-bearing persons to a profoundly exclusionary understanding of community membership. In this sense, the question from the end of Johnston-White's review is both definitive and a sort of red herring. Will "Catholics and the Church opt on balance for radical interpersonal solidarity or a return to exclusionary integralism"? As she herself notes, a personalist vision of justice carries the seeds of both outcomes.

Last but not least, I would like to underscore the importance of Wu's observation at the level of global history about "a collective generational experience for the Catholic leaders who came of age in the 1940s and were to become leaders of the church in the 1980s." Wu's framing helps to address Johnston-White's question about where to locate the key pivot point in the narrative of Catholic radicals. World War II was a defining generational pivot point, but certainly not the only one.

---

[44] Kosicki, "The Road to Liberation Theology: Experiments at the Intersection of Confessional and Secular Religion," in *100 Years of Communist Experiments*, ed. Vladimir Tismaneanu and Jordan Luber (Budapest: CEU Press, 2020).

[45] Gerd-Rainer Horn, *Western European Liberation Theology: The First Wave (1924-1959)* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008).

[46] Jacques Maritain, *The Person and the Common Good*, trans. John J. Fitzgerald (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1947), 13.

Catholics on the Barricades underscores the importance also of the Spanish Civil War (James Chappel and Giuliana Chamedes have done this, too), as well as—perhaps more uniquely—the Korean War, which radicalized young Catholic socialists behind the Iron Curtain who came to see themselves as putting nuclear deterrence before Church orthodoxy. This last consideration, in particular, surely represents an important point of confluence and conversation between *Catholics on the Barricades* and the story of Aloysius Jin Luxian reconstructed by Albert Wu. What Polish Catholicism was incubating by 1956 was nothing short of a revolution in the personalist imaginary, seeing the future in terms of a de-colonizing, de-Stalinizing 'world' Church, rather than a European institution conditioned only by intracontinental east-west dynamics.

The question of a 'world church' leaves us with the proper concluding note. Albert Wu asks, "why was this connection between Catholicism and socialism so fragile and so short-lived?" This question is both inspired and misleading. The actions of Ludwik Dembiński in 1968, or indeed of Mazowiecki in 1980, document the persistence of Catholic socialism beyond 1956. And yet, after de-Stalinization, this was no longer a Franco-Polish story, but instead a multi-vector narrative that would require us not only to connect Poland with Belgium, Germany, Italy, and Switzerland, or with the co-opted Catholic ecclesiastical structures of Hungary and Yugoslavia, but also with Ghana, India, Nigeria, the Philippines, and Venezuela. In the final analysis, the connection between Catholicism and socialism did not satisfy the need for reform within the Church—yet it offered guidelines and values for how to go about conceptualizing such reform. This is why today even Pope Francis is consistently labeled a 'socialist' by some. *Catholics on the Barricades* reconstructs the long story of one key point of entry into this semiotic game. For their careful readings and feedback, I once again thank the reviewers and the H-Diplo editors.